

# BODY BLASTING BALL WORKOUT

NOW IS THE TIME TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS IN YOUR MISSION TO GET YOUR BODY LOOKING FIRM AND FABULOUS BEFORE HITTING THE BEACH THIS SUMMER. THE 'BODY BLASTING BALL WORKOUT' IS PERFECT TO GET YOU LOOKING HOT BY USING A BALL TO STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE. By Jade Winter

**M**ost people who exercise regularly or have been to a health club or gym in the past 10-15 years would have seen a ball. Gym ball, Swiss ball, stability ball, Pilates ball, it doesn't matter what it's been called, in a nutshell... it's just a big ball you can do exercises on and when used correctly it can aid in any body toning program.

The great thing about the ball is that you can use one in the comfort of your home and not even have to be a member of a gym. These balls are readily available from your local sports store. Now, when buying a ball to work out on at home, there are more things to consider than just the colour and whether it will match your outfit.

You should read the label or the box carefully and look for things like 'anti-burst' and a kilogram rating. For example it may say 'anti-burst up to 500kg'. This is good and means that you can load 500kg onto the ball before it will break.

If a ball doesn't say 'anti-burst' it can mean that if the ball is under a load (ie. with you on it) and it gets a puncture, then it may explode or instantly burst and you'll end up on the ground faster than lightning and you may sustain a serious injury.

An anti-burst ball when receiving a puncture won't rip, it will slowly deflate. If your ball is showing signs of fatigue or wear then you should replace it immediately. These balls may be more expensive but the price of an injury can be far more costly with doctors, physio bills and time off work.

## HERE ARE A FEW MYTHS ABOUT THE BALL THAT SHOULD BE CLEARED UP.

- MYTH 1.** Using the ball while I do weights will be really targeting my core.
- MYTH 2.** Just by doing sit ups on the ball will improve my core stability.
- MYTH 3.** Balancing or standing on the ball will increase my core stability.
- MYTH 4.** Sitting on a ball and using it as a chair will improve my core.

If these statements are incorrect IF YOU CANNOT RECRUIT YOUR CORE STABILISING MUSCLES as you can easily do these things and not have your core stabilising muscles engaged. If you don't know how to engage the correct muscles, or have never been shown how to by a trained professional



then your body will simply take on a compensatory pattern and just use the muscles it's used to using and not your core stabilisers. This may also put you at risk of injuring yourself and potentially hurting your back. On the flip side if your core stabilising muscles are recruited when performing these activities then they will aid in part to improving overall stability, co-ordination, balance, muscle recruitment and activation.

Your core stabilising muscles include the transversus abdominis, the pelvic floor, multifidus, your obliques, the gluteus medius, gluteus minimus and deep hip rotators.

I include the buttock muscles in the above list because core stability is so much more than just abdominal work. You need to incorporate pelvic and gluteal stability to give your abdominals a chance of stabilising the spine in functional activities like running or walking and other daily activities. Yes, your abs need to be strong but a chain is only as strong as its weakest link and in the vast majority of people the buttocks are the weakest link in the chain.

This is only natural as we spend most of our day sitting on the butt muscles and not using them. In our formative years when most of our motor patterning is developed (at school) we again spend most of our time sitting down.

## TRY THIS SIMPLE TEST TO SEE IF YOUR CORE STABILITY COULD BE IMPROVED:

- Stand facing the mirror. Now balance on one leg. Now squat down on that leg. What did you see?
- Try it again.

- Did your knee on your standing leg roll inwards?
- Did your opposite hip drop down slightly?

If you said yes to these two things you need to do some work on your buttock muscles to get them strong. If your hip dipped, then each time you walk or run, every step you take the muscles in your back will have to work overtime to try to stabilise your pelvis.

This can lead to muscles, joints, ligaments getting overused and leading to issues with the discs in your spine.

The ball can be a great tool to complement any type of workout routine, but

keep it simple. Do exercises that you feel targeting the specific area you are working on. Don't try to get too fancy, and please don't try to stand or balance on a ball. Balancing on a ball means you are practised at balancing on a ball, not that you have great core stability; it won't tone your body and can be incredibly dangerous.

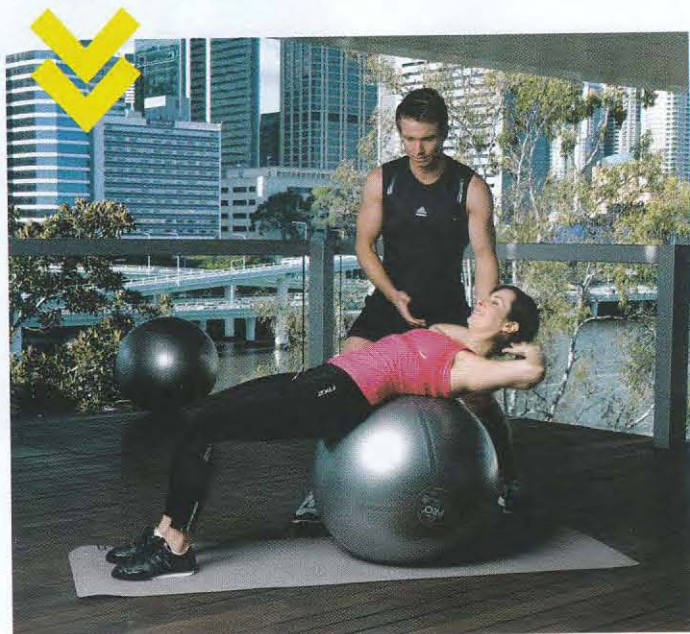
Target your butt with Pilates exercises. It's not the main buttock muscle (the gluteus maximus) that stabilises you when you're standing, it's all of the smaller ones that does the job.

Why not incorporate these Pilates mat and ball exercises into your gym routine or use them at home to complement your cardio training?

## ABDOMINAL CURL

### TARGET THE ABS WITH THIS SIMPLE EXERCISE

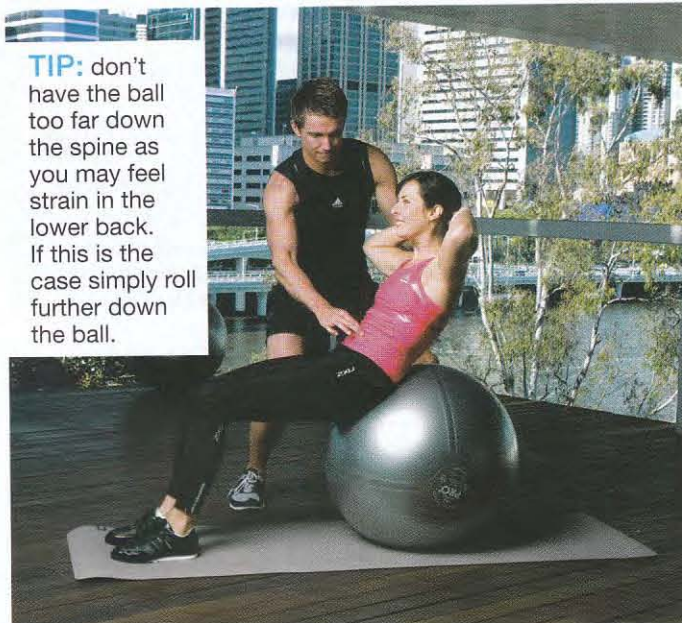
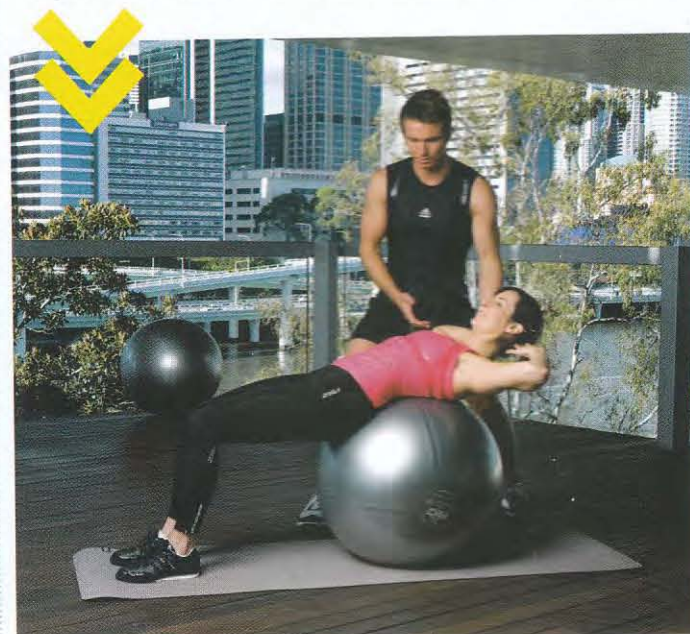
Lie on your back on the ball with your legs hip width apart and the ball reasonably high on the back, with fingers interlocked behind the head to support the neck. Elbows remain wide. Exhale as you slowly curl your ribs to your hips, raising your head, and shoulders curling your upper body up off the ball. Draw your belly button in towards your spine to flatten your abdominals. Inhale and slowly relax back down onto the ball. Repeat this 20 times.



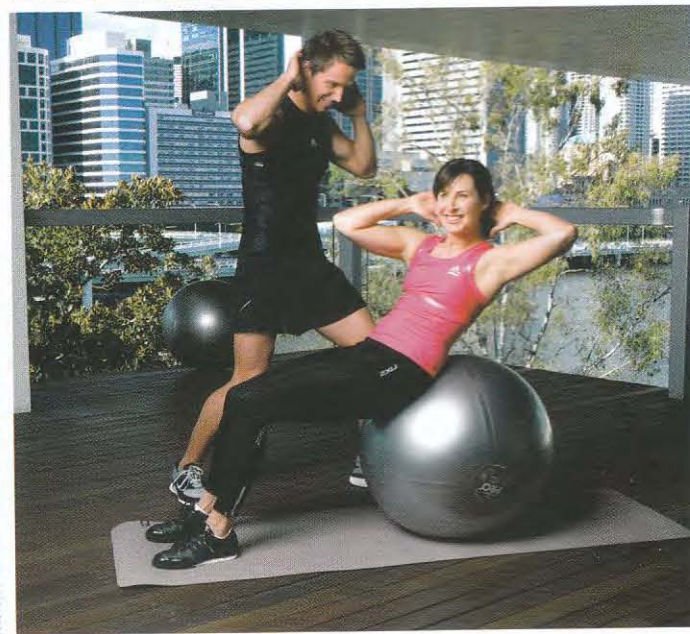
## OBLIQUE CURL

### ADD A TWIST TO START TRIMMING THE WAISTLINE

Lie on your back on the ball with your legs hip width apart and the ball reasonably high on the back, with fingers interlocked behind the head to support the neck. Elbows remain wide. Exhale as you slowly curl your ribs to your hips, raising your head, and shoulders curling your upper body up off the ball, while rotating your upper body. Draw your belly button in towards your spine to flatten your abdominals. Inhale and slowly relax back down onto the ball. Repeat this 20 times each side.



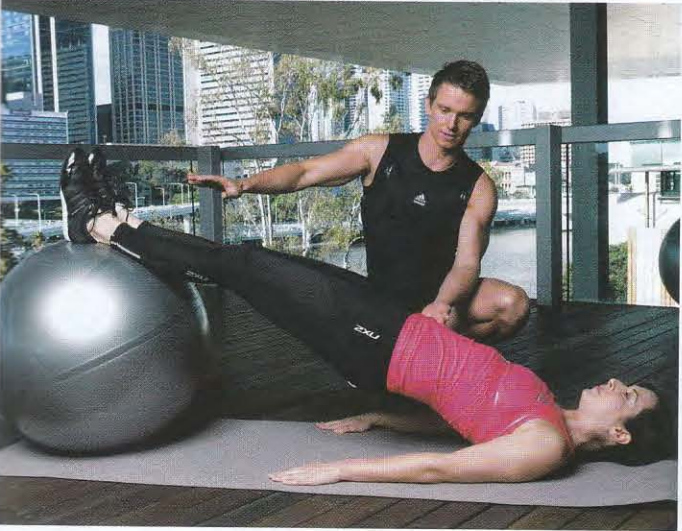
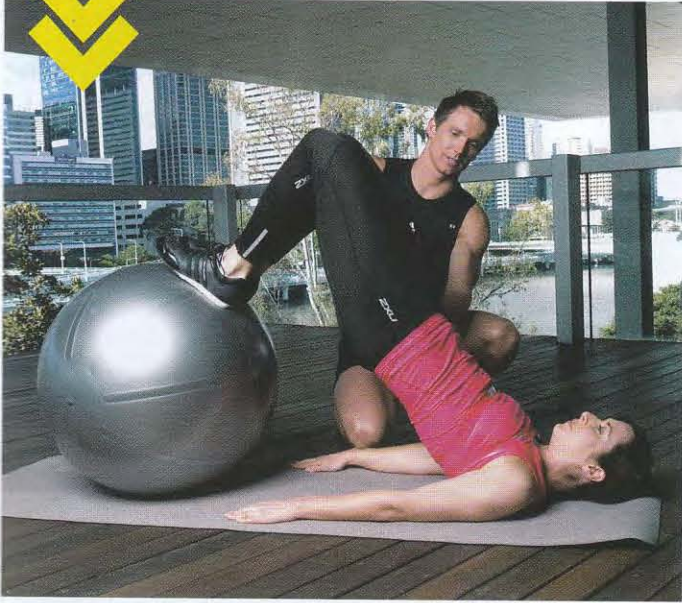
**TIP:** don't have the ball too far down the spine as you may feel strain in the lower back. If this is the case simply roll further down the ball.



## HAMSTRING CURLS

GREAT FOR TONING THE BACK OF THE UPPER LEGS

Lie on your back with your heels up on top of the ball and the hands beside the body. Slowly curl the body up off the floor so you are in one long, straight line. Exhale as you bend the knees, raising the hips high (without arching the back) and drawing the ball towards you. Then slowly roll the ball away from you as you extend the legs. Try to do 2 sets of 20 repetitions.



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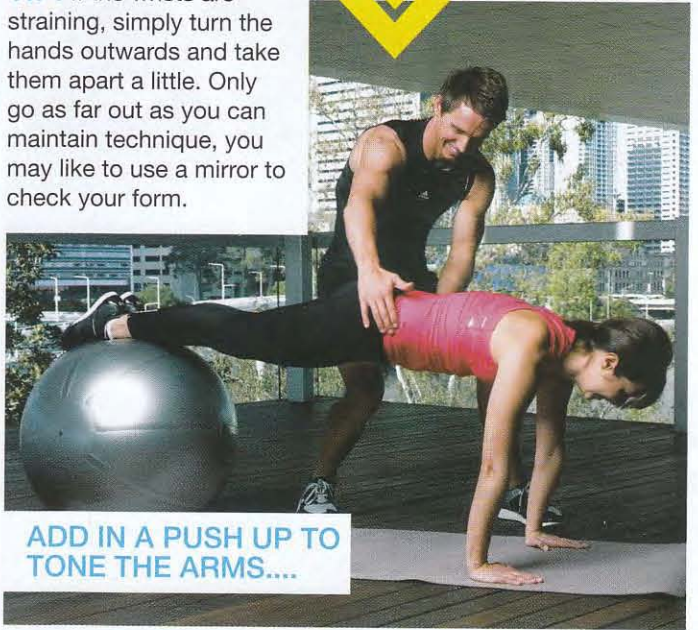
## PLANK

INCREASE YOUR CORE STABILITY AND FLATTEN YOUR ABS AT THE SAME TIME

Kneel down on the ground and place your stomach on the ball and your hands on the ground. Slowly walk the arms out so you are in a push up position with your legs up on the ball.

Concentrate on drawing the belly button up towards the ceiling and preventing any dipping or sagging through the back. Hold this for anywhere up to a minute.

**TIP:** If the wrists are straining, simply turn the hands outwards and take them apart a little. Only go as far out as you can maintain technique, you may like to use a mirror to check your form.

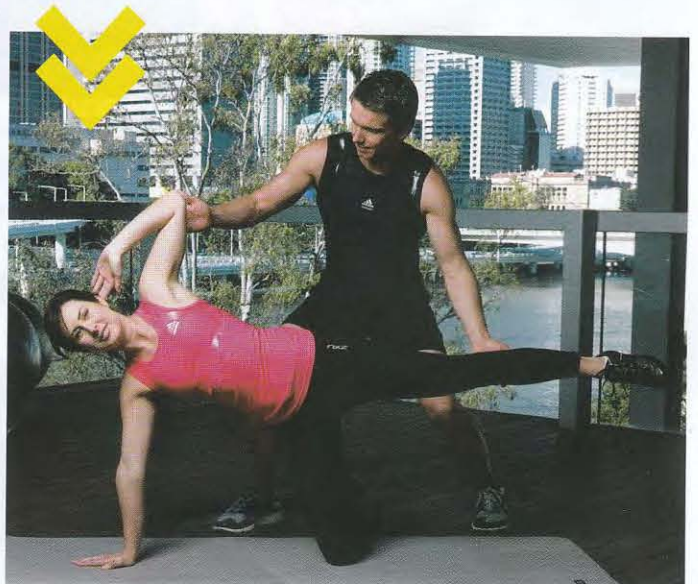


ADD IN A PUSH UP TO TONE THE ARMS...

## KNEELING SIDE KICK

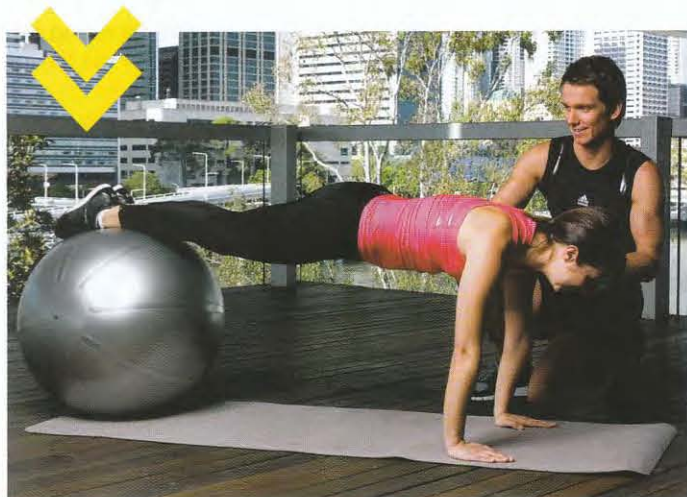
THIS WORKS THE BUTTOCKS, THIGHS AND ABDOMINALS

Kneel on one knee, with the other leg held out straight and lifted to hip height. Place one hand on your hip and the other on the mat, about 60cm from your knee, so that your hand, head, hip and lifted leg are all in one straight line. Pulse the leg up and down, squeezing the buttock muscles. Repeat 50 times with a 10-second hold at the end of the set of 50, then change sides.

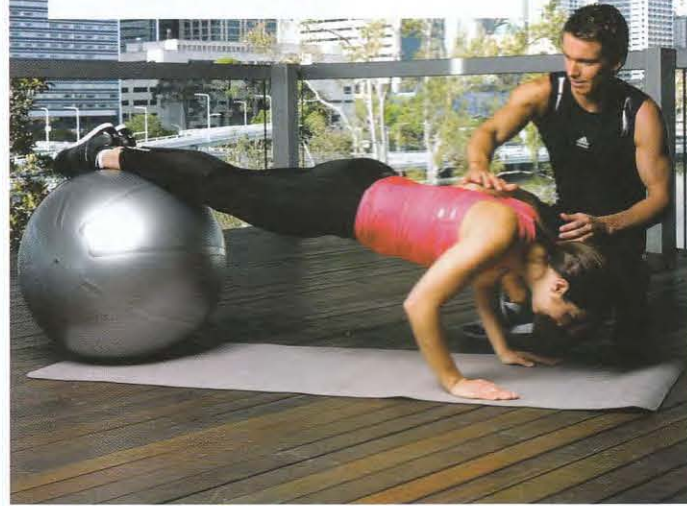


# PLANK PUSH-UPS

Get into a push-up position with the legs up on the ball, only going out as far as you can, keep a straight back without dipping. Inhale as you bend the arms, taking head and chest towards the floor. Exhale as you straighten the arms and press the body back up. Try 2 sets of 10-15 reps.



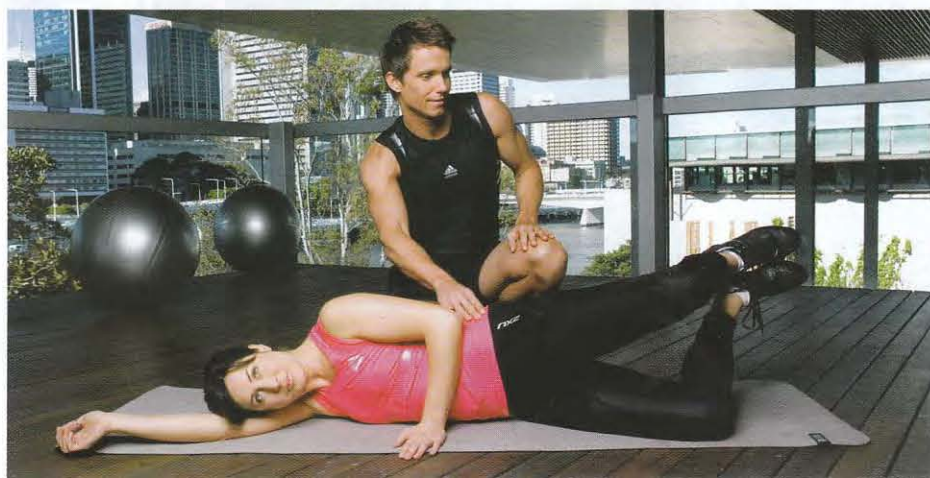
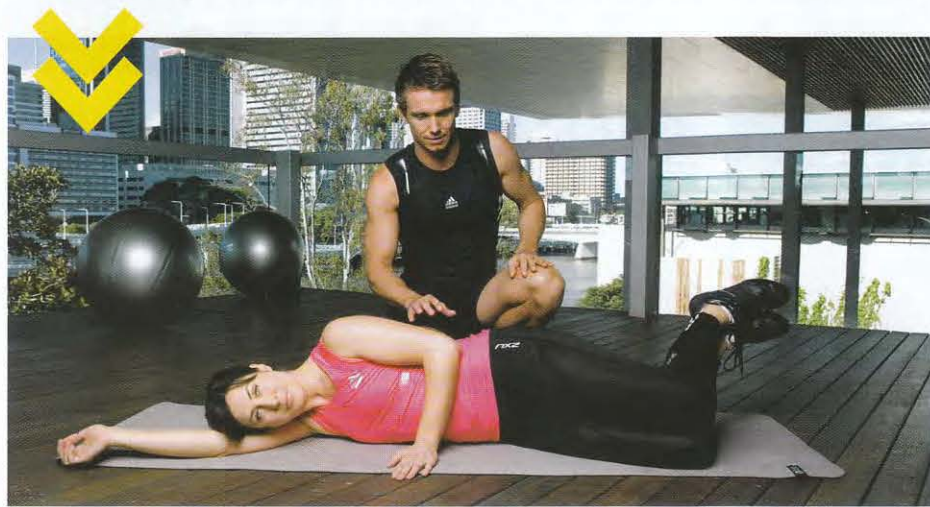
# ADD SOME BUTTOCK WORK FOR BETTER CORE STABILITY....



# CLAM!

## BEGIN TO TARGET THE BUTT WITH THIS SIMPLE EXERCISE

Lie on your side with your arm outstretched underneath your head and your head relaxed down. Knees are bent and your hips are rolled forward, raising the feet up in the air. Keeping the hips rolled forward and the heels together as you simply squeeze the top buttock and raise the knee upwards. Just check that the hip hasn't rolled backwards as this prevents the butt from being targeted. Repeat 30 times on each side. **ufm**



“IF YOUR BALL IS SHOWING SIGNS OF FATIGUE OR WEAR THEN YOU SHOULD REPLACE IT IMMEDIATELY. THESE BALLS MAY BE MORE EXPENSIVE BUT THE PRICE OF AN INJURY CAN BE FAR MORE COSTLY WITH DOCTORS, PHYSIO BILLS AND TIME OFF WORK.”